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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1571
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5356
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2034
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9019
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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: GLOBAL ECONOMY / FINANCIAL
CRISIS, AFGHANISTAN, BUSH ADMINISTRATION, NATO; NEW
DELHI.

This cable reports on relevant media reaction from
India's large non-English press. Embassy New Delhi
reports on English-language media via email in the daily
"Early Edition". USG customers please write to Geeta
Krishali (KrishaliG@state.gov) to subscribe to the "Early
Edition."

GLOBAL ECONOMY / FINANCIAL CRISIS

11. "SELF-CREATED CRISIS", editorial in the October 15
right-of-center Urdu daily "HAMARA SAMAJ", New Delhi:
"The President of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, termed
the present world financial crisis as man-made
"catastrophe". His statement needs no comment. Need not
to explain the reason behind the present fiscal turmoil,
which is shaking all capital markets and financial
institutions. What is the real reason behind it? And who
has created this turmoil? The serious and unimaginable
situation of food and energy inflation in the perspective
of prevailing fiscal crisis started knocking the doors in
many parts of the world. In India, itself, inflation is
soaring high in the sky. However, the government seems
less concerned about it. If it is, at all, concerned
about anything, it is certainly the nuclear deal with
America. We find that the present crisis is affecting
other countries more than who are responsible for
creating the crisis. The Indian government should take
stock of the grim situation, seriously else we may become
helpless amidst the crisis all around, and the western

imperialism will stand successful in their age-old conspiracies against us by destroying our economy and by making us subjugated forever."

AFGHANISTAN

¶2. "COMPROMISE WITH THE TALIBAN?" editorial in the October 16, 2008 CPI(M) Organ GANASHAKTI Bengali daily, Kolkata. "U.S. imperialism, led by George Bush is now looking for self-defense by compromising with the Taliban. Though unbelievable, it is true that America does not have any other alternative to fleeing from Afghanistan under duress. The volume of drug production in Afghanistan under the Karzai regime has surpassed the figure during the Taliban rule. No doubt, this drug cultivation has been helping the hapless Afghan masses on one hand and has become the chief economic source for the Taliban to constantly increase their strength on the other. The NATO force, deployed in Afghanistan, does not have proper strength and capability to combat with the growing power of the Taliban. At the same time, the Bush Administration is so embroiled in current financial crisis that it cannot focus on Afghanistan. Under this circumstance, America's dream of winning the Afghan war is going to be shattered. It cannot fulfill its dream of capturing Laden either. So, the U.S. will have to concede defeat and get away from Kabul. It would not be surprising even if a Karzai-Taliban coalition government

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is formed in Kabul in the next year's election. America will have to seek the Taliban's assistance if it wants to quit Kabul. This is the harsh reality."

BUSH ADMINISTRATION

¶3. "AMERICA'S FREETHOUGHT LIBERALS LAUNCH AN OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION" op-ed article by columnist Amarendra Dhaneshwar in the October 16, 2008, Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily AAPLA MAHANAGAR. "The federal lawsuit filed by U.S.-based Freedom From Religion Foundation, challenging President George W. Bush's decision to designate the first Thursday in May as "National Day of Prayer," is a welcome development for rationalists all over the world. It is an eye-opener for elected representatives and government officials in the Indian administration who unabashedly endorse religion in public life. The foundation is a voice of reason in these hysterical times when heads of state like Bush take immense pride in linking national success and well-being with religion. The foundation argues that the administration working 'hand-in-glove' with a certain National Day Prayer Task Force violates the free and secular spirit of the U.S. Constitution. This task force, which is based on Judeo-Christian principles, aims to pressure governors from all 50 states to issue official proclamations for a prayer day. All these activities spell out a state preference for a specific religion over the others. Also the proclamations create an atmosphere of insecurity for nonreligious Americans. Similar logic applies to the Indian milieu where politicians openly encourage religious celebrations and prayer, thereby treating nonbelievers as political outsiders..."

NATO

¶4. "NATO'S ROLE AND AFGHANISTAN" editorial in the October 16, 2008 Mumbai-based right-of-center Gujarati daily MUMBAI SAMACHAR. "America and other NATO nations which

find themselves entrapped in strife-torn Afghanistan and Iraq are in the process of setting a stage to exit from these regions. Reports emanating from Afghanistan suggest that the Karzai government is making efforts to convince the Taliban leaders to join the government there. One is not sure how the Taliban will respond to this offer but one sure thing is that President Karzai has understood that the need of the hour for Afghanistan is to work towards stabilizing its economy. This is not possible without the support of all the parties... The internal conflict in this region for the last 20 years has caused colossal damage to this nation. As far as America is concerned, it will also agree to this solution as it has not yet succeeded in reigning in fugitives like Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar. Violence is just breeding more violence... Hence, Afghanistan is trying to create an atmosphere of consensus. Besides, political

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stability in Afghanistan augurs well both for India and Pakistan."
WHITE